



PLANNING COMMITTEE – 15TH AUGUST 2012

**SUBJECT: TREE PRESERVATION ORDER 64 OF 2012 ST. PAUL'S CHURCH,
HIGH STREET, NEWBRIDGE**

REPORT BY: CHIEF EXECUTIVE

1. This TPO at St. Paul's Church, Newbridge was made in February of this year in response to a notification to remove the trees (Local Planning Authority reference 11/0893). Under the 1990 Planning Act, a notice must be served on the Council before carrying out works to trees in a conservation area, as is the case here, which allows the Local Planning Authority to consider whether those trees should be protected by a preservation order. In this case it was recognised by Officers that the trees have largely outgrown their position, but in view of their contribution to the character of the conservation area, they should only be removed if they were replaced in an appropriate manner. That could only be ensured by the Local Planning Authority if a TPO were in place. The next step in the process is to consider whether the TPO should be confirmed.
2. A letter has been received from the Vicar of the church objecting to the TPO on the following grounds:
 - A mini tornado damaged properties in the area last year, blew down one of the trees and damaged the front wall.
 - A report has been prepared by a structural engineer identifying cracks and bulges in the wall close to individual trees.
 - It would be impractical to repair the wall, which retains the land behind it, but its replacement will have to be carried out to a modern standard that will involve the removal of the trees.
 - Concern is raised as to who would be responsible if the trees cause further damage.

Those comments are supported by the Archdeacon of Newport.

3. In all there are 17 trees along the High Street frontage, including Cypress, Laburnum, Cedar, Birch, Beech, Maple and Silver Fir. All but one are classed as middle aged or mature. They are a significant feature in the conservation area, which covers the church – itself a listed building – the former chapel on the opposite side of the road, and the listed Newbridge Institute and Memorial Hall. However, it is evident that one tree was blown last winter, causing damage to the front wall, and there are cracks elsewhere in the wall. The trees are planted very close to the wall, and there is a likelihood that further problems will occur in the future. Furthermore, the trees obscure views of the church, which could make a greater contribution to the character of the conservation area.
4. It is therefore concluded that a TPO should be confirmed in this case, but solely as a means to ensure that when an application is submitted to remove the trees, the Local Planning Authority has the power to impose conditions that secure more appropriate planting, better related to the wall and the church, and enhancing the listed building's contribution to the character of the conservation area. Officers have already been in discussion with the Vicar and her Tree Advisor about the matter.

5. RECOMMENDATION: That Tree Preservation Order 64 of 2012 St Paul's Church, High Street, Newbridge is confirmed.